



**"Editor's Choice:
Portfolio Manager and Stock Screener"**

-PC Magazine, March 23, 1999



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From: Natalie Jeremijenko

To: "Sarah Herda"

Subject: Re: Storefront for Art & Architecture

Date: Thu, 28 Oct 1999 05:53:21 -0400

Dear Laura,

The following is the proposal that I have been meaning to get to you. The delay is not disinterest but rather the fact that the piece that I first mentioned to you has been a little difficult to get working. However the following proposal I think makes a better alternative. It brings together three disparate projects - all new work yet conceptually inflected by each other. They all deal with surface phenomena - skin, phenotypes,

acoustics - and new technologies.... they are neophylic and fetishistic but I would argue they also frame the cultural issues that are being quietly reconceptualized with the technologies deployed. So the working title for the show is Neologisms.

I would still like to do the Feb/Mar slot that we originally discussed. I have attached the proposed pieces as a word file and pasted it in below.

Thanks for your considerations
nj

Neologisms:

Collects new works on surface phenomena.

1. bench node: between signal and noise
2. touch
3. highdefinition

bench node: between signal and noise

The bench node is a public bench that controls the sound experience of the person seated in the traffic island. The design exploits active noise cancellation techniques (and passive) to produces a drastically altered experience of the ambient noise environment, dissolving almost all of the noise in the environment when the 'user' is seated in the optimal position. The chair is actually designed for the site directly opposite the Flat Iron bldg in Manhattan, NY where Fifth Avenue and Broadway converge. The view orients the sitter towards the 'Silicon Alley', producing media for the 'information age' and provides synthesized silence in the face of it. By deploying Digital Signal Processing to cancel rather than productively - in the face of this area. the user is

The design of the seat of the chair, with respect to its physical form, is molded to focus the sound toward the sensors used to cancel the sound. The form takes its physical vocabulary from the 'park bench' but is developed from modeling the acoustic space and the ambient noise environment of the site the analysis provides an approximation of the effect for very simple shapes and iterates this with the tangible form. Hence the chair captures the level of complexity of acoustic phenomena that can be modeled in the synthetic environment and the efficacy of the digital signal processing deployed in the device. Because this cancellation is effective in a highly localized area the 'sitter' can adjust their

position to optimize this perceptual experience and move in and out of this invisible node. The equipment incorporated into the bench form for the active noise cancellation is minimal and does not dominate the form. The structural elements of the chair are also tuned to attenuate vibration in the frequency range that is not covered by the active strategies.

While the digital phenomena of cyberspace and the internet are most often imagined as immaterial space, this project focuses on the physical continuity of the material issues inherent in both digital and analogue phenomena. It provides a place for the 'user' to sit between digital synthetic space and the real noisy messy world, between signal and noise.

This will be the first exhibition of the working prototypes.

touch

Skin is a site of contest, it is the physical limit to the subject, critically divided into the inside and outside of the skin. The socio-political contest over color, marking, scarring, piercing and covering skin redoubles the traditional fascination with the 'surface' of representational practices, and this surface of experience. As biotechnology introduces representational practices that use as their medium biological tissue we generate conceptual shifts similar to the introduction of the medium of photography. The photographic 'realism' thoroughly refigured the representational arts and this points to the refiguring of representational strategies of the present historical moment - one which implements a realism that is based on the fidelity of the material as opposed to the fidelity of the image. However the privilege of biological material is that it is held outside of the realm of representation it is conceived as the 'real thing' rather than an image. Yet human tissue is used ubiquitously as a representation of us in the labs that develop our drugs, in the research that defines our functions and disease, in the construction of knowledge on the material phenomena of bodies

definitions and knowledge that carry tremendous cultural weight on how we understand and conceive of ourselves.

This project takes the material of human skin and draws it into the cultural sphere of representation. It uses the synthesized skin derived from human epithelial and dermal cells, but stripped of immune markers that identify individuals. It is used as a surface on which to present images. This is expired sample of Apligraph, the commercially available human skin. When it is used therapeutically on severe burn cases it becomes incorporated into the body of the patient and after a few days the tissue itself is not distinct from the host material. Although our own skin is vasculated and has neurons and free nerve endings and other sensory elements however otherwise Apligraph is structural similar to human skin (in corpora). This SKIN can be touched, it is dry on the epithelial layer not unlike our own skin.

The images imposed on the surface are a series of portraits named after the idiomatic categories used in medical research tests
non-specific portraiture- for example:

...of African-American descent, male aver 45;

...non-smoking, post menopausal, female, presenting abnormal bleeding;

will be represented with a facial portrait on the tissue. The invocation of the tradition of representation practices -- that is, as an image, on a surface is extended by literally framing the surface (to supply CO2) and affixing it to a wall.

High Definition

Recent work in the manipulation of genes in butterflies and moths have demonstrated that it is a relatively simple set of genes that are involved in the brilliant wing patterns associated with Lepidoptera. The optical phenomena of the display strategies of this species are due to the high resolution manipulation of the wing 'scales' that are of the same order of magnitude as the wavelengths of visible light. It

is this same strategy that is emulated in the development of microdisplay technology in CMOS based screen technology. In the case of the butterflies the surface of the wing is being manipulated as a display device for imaging the functionality of the genes. The phenotype is not however a direct mapping of the genotype and this surface (the wings) also displays that by foiling complete control. Because the relationship is more direct than in other complex organism, but less direct than one that can provide a clear mapping of the transductions involved this research is continuing.

The project under development for the exhibition is to reproduce these genetic manipulations used in this research to manipulate the wing appearance. In so doing the intention is to exploit this display of genetic manipulation in some visible way- writing or drawing with genes. Because the genes are conspicuously understood to be code that writes or encodes biological life, it is endemically coded in a linguistic conceptualization, and moreover inscribing this language is then the logical but arguable extension. The intent of the project is to treat the organism as an image production technology and its degree of success is the phenomena being framed.

This proposal is to display these manipulated organisms alive within the space. They would be housed in an enclosed space at the narrower end of the gallery space. The space would be lit from behind the housing and shine thru it to activate the entire space with the ongoing motion of their shadows projected on to all the exhibition surfaces.

At 04:26 PM 10/27/99 -0700, you wrote:

Dear Natalie,

I'm not sure if this is the best way to reach you but I thought I would give it a try.

I'm re-sending a note you may or may not have received (this time



with gross spelling errors corrected!) If there is a better email address to reach you at, please let me know.

Best regards,
Sarah

Previous message:

First off, I'd like to offer a belated congratulations!

Since we last saw each other, Laura and I have proposed a show of your work

at Storefront this spring, as we discussed, and the Board is very enthusiastic about the prospect. I know you were planning on sending me a

proposal and at this point it would be great to discuss this with you as

well as officially confirm the exhibition so we can begin planning (publicity, etc..) I am still aiming for the February/March time slot that

I mentioned to you in the summer and I hope this is still possible (as the rest of the calendar is quite full at this point).

Please give be a call at Storefront 212.431.5795 (fax: 212.431.5755) or email

I look forward to hearing from you,
Sarah

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